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Collective Memory in Advocating Peace. The Nanjing Incident as a case study

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Idham Badruzaman,

"Collective Memory in Advocating Peace. The Nanjing Incident as a case study"

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Contents of **CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture 20.2 (2018)**

Thematic Issue ***The One Asia Foundation and its Cooperation and
Peace-Making Project***

Ed. Asunción López-Varela Azcárate

<<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol20/iss2/>>

Abstract: In his paper "Collective Memory in Advocating Peace. The Nanjing Incident as a case study," Idham Badruzaman provides an example of how to build a peaceful Asian Community. The Foundation is establishing forms of bilateral cooperation at the educational level; mostly in universities and higher education institutions across the world. These programs are contributing to create cross-cultural ties within the Asian Community and across the world, surpassing national interests and boundaries, fostering inter-culturalism, and promoting tolerance amid differences. By focusing on the Nanjing Incident, the paper provides an example of how the building of collective memory can help reconciliation, showing the efforts made by Japan and China to maintain a neighbor-relationship. The study collects information about the different actions undertaken to create a collective memory of the Nanjing Incident in order to turn this public recollection into reconciliation. There have been at least seven efforts made to make public recollection about the Nanjing Incident. They include the following activities: publishing a book about Nanjing, building the National Memorial Hall, Annual Commemoration, setting up a National Memorial Day, registering the inscription with UNESCO, establishing the Peace and Research Institute, and eventually registering the city of Nanjing to become A City of Peace. In addition, there are many other events and elements that are worth-remembering as part of the collective memory for both the Chinese and the Japanese people. All of them are directed to the normalisation of neighbour relations, in the spirit of peace and reconciliation.

Idham BADRUZAMAN

Collective Memory in Advocating Peace. The Nanjing Incident as a case study

In 1937, when the town of Guernica in the Spanish Basque Country was bombarded following General Francisco Franco's orders, another human tragedy was taking place in another hemisphere of the globe; the Nanjing Incident (or known as Nanking), China. The incident took place during the second Sino-Japanese War 1937-1945, when China started to present strong resistance to the Japanese occupation which had begun in 1931, after the Japanese invaded Manchuria.

The Nanjing Incident resulted in a huge number of victims (around 300.000), including men, women, and children (British Broadcasting Corporation News "Scarred by history: The Rape of Nanjing"). However, the number of victims is still considered a controversial issue, the term of 'massacre' has been rejected by Japanese government. This paper uses the word 'incident' in order to grant impartiality to the text in conveying the message and its reception.

Building close relationships between countries and governments is not easy, particularly when the countries involved are neighbors, and there is a past history of territorial disputes, wars and, in some cases, horrible stories of violence and aggression. One of the characteristics of 'culture' is that it is able to turn the natural inclination to individual forgetting into collective memory. In the wake of World War II, in *La mémoire collective*, Maurice Halbwachs, the French philosopher argued that human memory operates in a collective context which requires group selection and approval. "Past events do not become facts until they are communally revised and confirmed, as work by Hayden White has shown. For Halbwachs, memory is not just about lived time; it is also about socially lived space and about its collective representation. Thus, the reconstruction of loss and presence through intersubjective dialogue and negotiation, between the remembering subject and all his or her others, is part of the porosity and permeability of memory borderlands" (López-Varela 88).

Along similar lines, sociologist Marie-Claire Lavabre has indicated that collective memory can be categorized with regards to two aspects: lived experience belonging to a specific group or memory passed on by generation through different media, such as oral and written testimonies, historical monuments and other commemorative items. James Reilly, a specialist in Northeast Asian Politics at the University of Sydney, further explores the efforts to make collective memory into forms of public recollection that would help overcome collective traumas and guide towards reconciliation.

Nicolas Russell has identified three kinds of memory: semantic, episodic and procedural. Semantic memory is the past experience that has nothing to do with the person who remembers it. Russell indicates that it is similar to historical records; that is, a mere set of facts in the past. Episodic memory also refers to the past, but here it is directly related to someone who remembers it, or to the concrete experience of other people who have shared the event the person who remembers. Finally, for Russell, procedural memory is unconscious and refers to particular skills or the know-how of doing things, particularly with the use of objects. When it comes to a collective memory, such memory would be episodic memory because it has something to do with the identity of a particular group. Collective memory is socially constructed, and constantly revised by the group. It evolves with the identity of the group in mutual inter-dependence. According to Reilly, the process of making collective

memory into a narrative of the past is known as collective remembrance or public recollection. When the people involved in the event are not on the same page yet, as it has occurred in the case of the Nanjing Incident, collective remembrance needs to be propitiated through activities and campaign.

John Paul Lederach's theory of Conflict Transformation as positive reconciliation distinguishes between conflict and violence. As conflict becomes more violent, it can fail to be transformed or resolved. Lederach's insights towards peace-building approaches have shown that conflict is something normal, but that it can even be contemplated as positive process, leading to dialogue, consensus and reconciliation. According to the Organization of Global Reconciliation, a Non-Governmental Organization based in Melbourne, Australia, reconciliation encompasses a broader field than conflict resolution, involving various legal, political or diplomatic aspects. Reconciliation can extend to the establishment of peace, justice, fairness, healing and forgiveness, the overcoming of personal enmities, the recovery of cultural identities, the fostering of productive relationships within and between communities, and the role of cultural, religious and other factors.

Following the theoretical framework sketched above, this paper uses three main aspects to analyze the efforts made to transform public recollection of the Nanjing Incident into a reconciliatory roadmap. As such, the paper starts from the theory of collective memory and the idea of conflict transformation leading to reconciliation. It takes as case study the Nanjing Incident, where aspects related to memory recollection are seen to complement each other, highlighting the positive side of problems, and the focus on peace and public recollection.

As indicated above, collective memory has been proven to play a significant role in the creation of the historical memories of communities. In China, the recovery of historical memory is particularly important, as it was partially scattered after the Chinese civil war and until Mao Zedong proclamation of People's Republic of China on October 1, 1949. In the case of the Nanking incident, the Chinese and the Japanese governments have been on different pages for a long time. Disagreements are not only related to the use of the term 'massacre.' The number of victims has also been a source of controversy. Japanese historians have stated that the numbers were situated somewhere between 100.000 and 200.000 (Kyodo 2015, 2017). Chinese sources insist that the number of victims were around 300.000, and that for this reason the term 'massacre' should be used. In spite of Chinese and Japanese disagreements on the terms to describe the incident, and on the number of victims, the incident did happen. For the first-time a reconciliation agenda began to take place in 2012. It involved Chinese and Japanese participants and was facilitated by a Canada-based Association for Learning and Preserving the History of WWII in Asia/ALPHA. Subsequently, a first commemoration of the Nanjing Incident took place in several educational institutions in Canada.

After the Nanjing Incident took place, Chinese people did not immediately develop a collective memory of the event. Time is required for memories to be formed, and Chinese people only starting engaging in collective remembrance in the 1990s. Before the 2012 commemorative event, marking the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Nanjing Incident, there were a number of controversial attempts at recovering the memory of the Nanjing Incident. In 1997, Iris Chang, a historian of Chinese descent born in the United States, published a book titled *The Rape of Nanking*. Throughout the book, she

uses the expression 'the second rape of Nanjing' referring to the fact of the lack of public recognition towards the incident, even at an international level (Chang 283). The book became a bestseller and helped break six decades of silence over the incident. In the first part, the story is told from three perspectives: that of the Japanese soldiers who performed the killings; that of the Chinese civilians who witnessed the atrocities, and that of a group of western citizens who refused to abandon the city and were able to create a safety zone that saved many people. The second part focuses on international reactions to the massacre, especially by European and North-American governments. The third part of the book examines the reasons that, according to the author Iris Chang, kept the circumstances of the incident out of public consciousness for decades.

Chang's recollection came first from her parents, who had escaped to the United States via Taiwan. In the first pages of the book, Chang refers to her parents' accounts of the incident, which she says "remained buried in the back of my mind as a metaphor for unspeakable evil" (7-8). Chang's research was also based on the diaries of John Rabe, a German businessman who acted as senior chief of the European-American establishment that remained in the city, and whose diaries were translated into English the following year after Chang's publication. At the time of the attack on Nanjing, Rabe was Deputy Group Leader in the Nationalist Socialist Party. On November 22, 1937, Rabe and other western nationals created the Nanking Safety Zone to provide Chinese refugees with shelter and food from the impending Japanese advance. In his diaries, he wrote that his motivation was 'moral.' He was elected as leader of the zone precisely because of his status as member of the Nazi party. On December 1, 1937, Nanjing Mayor ordered citizens to abandon the city or move to the Safety Zone. The city fell on December 13, with around 500.000 people still in it. The testimony of Wilhelmina (Minnie) Vautrin, an American missionary who had spent over 25 years in China, was also recorded in diary form and used by Chang in her own account. Vautrin stayed behind in the Nanking Safety Zone, returning to the United States in 1940. Unable to come to terms with her grief and depression, she committed suicide in 1941. Vautrin was posthumously awarded the Emblem of the Blue Jade by the Chinese government. Rabe, who had returned to Germany in 1938, lived in poverty and in the territory under Soviet occupation because of his Nazi past. In 1948, the new Mayor and citizens of Nanjing collected funds for the family. Every month they sent food and letters to the family. Rabe died in 1950, and in 1997, coinciding with the publication of Chang's book, his tombstone was moved from Berlin to Nanjing. It is now at the Memorial Site, together with Vautrin's.

The book received both criticism and acclaim by the general public and by specialists and historians. Some claimed that it was full of misinformation. On the Japanese side, the argument was also made by civilian, Seiji Fuji, CEO of the Japanese chain Hotel APA, who wrote a book entitled *Theoretical Modern History II—The Real History of Japan*. The book refuses to fully recognize Chinese claims on the incident (Global Times 16 January 2017). López-Varela has written about memory as a borderland concept from a semiotic perspective: "Memories are, in fact, the traces of "webs of significance," to use Max Weber's expression, of the cultural activities of human groups, which include systems of beliefs, symbols, rituals, intellectual and artistic activities. Semiotically conceived as webs, memories are mediators between individual and collective experiences, real and imaginary, between

past, present and future. However, they can sometimes be internalized as mental borders of prejudiced representations against others" (89).

Along these lines, the Spanish scholar has advanced the concept of 'hybrid narrative' to refer to the tensions within autobiographical writing that merges historical group recollection with individual story. In her view, the 20th century has seen a shift from the idea of monumental memory as one-dimensional conception of unitary national recollection, to a dismantling of the notion of historical event and the unveiling of this condition of artifice, performed by Hayden White in the 1990s, for instance. It is in this context that Iris Chang's narrative should be placed. "It is only recently that memory studies are opening new levels of analysis and moving in the direction of acts of resistance, contemplated as an ideological reminder of minority rights, of regret and mourning for past abuse, and of disenchantment, disappearance and loss" (91). López-Varela concludes that "fictionalization is essential to the creation of the transitional realm that renders the representation of affective life experience in terms of generic and intermedial hybridism" (91). Perhaps, on these grounds, we could defend Chang's book as an important contribution to trigger and emotional climate appropriate to remember, but also to transcend remembrance into acts of reconciliations.

Thus, although a first version of the Nanjing Memorial Hall, built in 1985 on the southwest corner of the city, an area known as Jiangdongmen ("the pit of ten thousand corpses"), a site where many bodies were buried, it was in this climate of memorialization, typical of the 1990s, that the Hall was renovated and enlarged in 1995. It now covers 28.000 square meters, with over 200 skeletal remains of victims exhibited in coffin displays. Historical records, objects and videos serve to remember the victims. It is important to point out that many historical items were donated by the Japanese government and Japanese and international friendship groups. A Peace Park was also built with Japanese funding support, including sculptures and with peace inscriptions (Ehrlich; see also Cable News Network 2014).

As already mentioned, in 2012, on the occasion of the commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Nanjing Incident, many events took place (China Network Television web). The commemoration was first promoted by the Association for Learning and Preserving the History of WWII in Asia (ALPHA), based in Canada. Event took place around Joy Kogawa House in Vancouver. The Canadian author, of Japanese descent, has largely written about reconciliation, after her own experience of internment at a camp for Japanese Canadians after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941 during World War II. Students and teachers of several schools in the area participated in the commemoration, and the event produced an education program for a week called 'Nanking Massacre Awareness Week', with invited speakers from several prominent organizations such as the Japanese-Canadian Citizen Association, Human Rights Committee, Peace Philosophy Centre, and Canadians for Reconciliation Society, gathering to discuss the reconciliation and peace prospects between Japanese and Chinese governments.

As for Chinese government, the official commemoration was first held in 2014 with President Xi Jinping leading the ceremony at the site of the incident, Nanjing Memorial Hall. The event, which was attended by approximately 10.000 people, marked the seventy-seventh anniversary of the incident.

The ceremony stressed that the reasons to perform this official remembrance act was to seek peace and reconciliation: "to better preserve history... to never forget the past... to treasure peace and open the way to the future" (China Central Television News 2014). Representatives of Chinese youth read a Declaration of Peace or Ode to Peace emphasized the event was celebrated as remembrance but also as reconciliation, and in pursuit of peace in the world.

The same year 2014, a National Memorial Day was established coinciding with the first official commemoration of Nanjing Incident by the Chinese government. This Memorial Day was approved by the Chinese government, and coinciding with another national holiday called Victory Day, which celebrates Chinese Resistance against the Japanese. The two memorial days take place on December 13 and September 3 respectively (China Daily 2014). In addition, these acts of remembrance, a set of stamped commemorative postcards and envelopes were created. (Jiangsu China).

After 2014, several other steps have been taken towards the remembrance of the Nanjing Incident. One involves the registration and preservation of all the documents related to the incident into the *Memory of the World* at the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization UNESCO (*Memory of the World*). The inscription of Nanjing Incident was approved in 2015 at Abu Dhabi (United Arab Emirates) by UNESCO Director-General, Irina Bokova, after received recommendation from archivists and librarians (see McCurry).

Two years after the first commemoration for Nanjing (then annually commemorated by the Chinese government), an Institute of Nanjing Massacre History and International Peace Studies was established on March 1st, 2016. The institute is aimed to make trans-regional, trans-disciplinary research and cooperation, to offer advice and suggestions to governmental offices, to provide reference information for the government in public decision-making, and to promote global awareness and concern for world peace (see Nanjing University).

In 2017, Nanjing application to become an International City of Peace was approved. A total of 172 cities in about 50 countries and regions are now on the International Cities of Peace list, according to its website, including Coventry in England, Bern in Switzerland, Amsterdam in the Netherlands and Berlin in Germany, among others (see China Internet Information Center 2017).

Besides all these acts of public remembrance and reconciliation around the Nanjing Incident, there have also been a number of events directed at the normalization of relations between the two countries involved. In 1972, a Joint Statement was signed by Prime Minister of Japan, Kakuei Tanaka, and Prime Minister of China, Zhou Enlai, in Beijing. The spirit of the statement was to normalize diplomatic relations between these two countries, improve mutual development, and agree on roadmap of "mutually beneficial based on common strategic interests" (Takahara n.p). Among the main factors in the tagline, national security, economics and social-culture.

At the level of international politics, East Asian and South Asian regions sought to consolidate cooperation. Since the end of the Cold War, one of the most important strategic alliances was the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), formed on 8 August 1967 by the Philippines, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, and Singapore. As stated by YAB (the most honourable) Dato' Seri Abdullah HJ Ahmad Badawi, Prime Minister of Malaysia (2003-2009) on his speech at East Asia

Summit in Kuala Lumpur in 2012, the East Asian Community is still work-in-progress (cited in Badawi 2012). In a speech pronounced in Singapore in 2002, Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi proposed its establishment of an East Asian Community (EAC). Starting from ASEAN cooperation, the East Asia Community would include Japan, China, the Republic of South Korea, Australia and New Zealand, as core members of the community. However, the speech created suspicions in China at the inclusion of the last two members mentioned. For Japan, their inclusion would hold a double function, providing a channel towards the United States, and opening the East Asian Community to the rest of the world. The community supported ASEAN's idea of an ASEAN+3 formula, established in 1997 and institutionalized in 1999. Agreements on anti-terrorist cooperation and security had been reached when in March 2007, a Japan-Australia Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation was signed. However, the purpose of EAC was to start community-building efforts with Japan's most complicated relationships, those with China and South Korea, representing an important initiative to overcome historical problems and seek reconciliation beyond a bilateral context.

Setting aside territorial disputes, if one looks at other sectors of the bilateral relations between Japan and China, it is surprising that the two countries have achieved tremendous successful stories. In the sector of trade and investment, according to East Asia Forum, both countries have lived in the status of interdependence for a long time (see Drysdale). Bilateral trade between these two countries was the third largest in the world in 2014, amounting to \$340 billion. This led to put Japan as China biggest trade partner. Similarly, Japan placed China as its second biggest trade partner. Other than that, Japan is the biggest investor (Foreign Direct Investment/FDI) in China for an amount of \$100 million in 2014, even bigger than the next biggest FDI Investor in China, United States, with \$30 million.

Starting in 1979, Japan assisted China in different ways; for example, providing loan aid, grants and technical cooperation. Among those three, the most stimulating is the first, which came in the form of foreign direct investment or FDI (see Hilpert). On the other hand, China has been helping Japan in its economic sector by marketing Japanese products for China 1.3 billion population. In addition, Japanese companies were allowed to produce their products overseas in China, in order to keep the cost of production suitable with the local purchasing power. These facts of the mutual economic cooperation of these two countries comes as a surprise, in the face of historical incidents and political errors committed by both neighbors (Ryan).

Other concrete forms of cooperation between Japan and China is Japanese support of the "One Belt, One Road cross-border Infrastructure Initiative" (see Kyodo). Began in 2013, the initiative involves over 65 countries connected through land line, railways (Belt) and maritime line, ports (Road) via countries in the southeast Asia and the east coast of Africa (The Sydney Morning Herald 2017; for more information see several other papers in this thematic issue). The project is valued as seven times the Marshall Plan put forth by the United States of America to rebuild European countries after the Second World War. The support of Japan would definitely mean something for this mega project as it is a support from the region.

Finally, in the cultural sector, tourist exchanges between the two countries have been on the increase in the past few years. There is also the presence in Japan of one of the cutest Chinese diplomats, Panda bamboo bear. Since 1972, Japan has been treated as a special country in what Chinese Policy knows as 'Panda Diplomacy' (see Holland), form of soft diplomacy to maintain good relations and work together at regional and international level.

Thus, to return to the Nanjing Incident, efforts for normalisation and strengthening of relations between Japan and China are visible in many aspects, including those initiatives mentioned above. More recently, Prime Minister of Japan, Shinzo Abe attended the Anniversary of diplomatic ties between China and Japan and the national day of China on September 28, 2017. The ceremony of the 45th anniversary was held in Beijing. Taro Kono, Japan Foreign Minister even cancelled a parliamentary meeting to be present in China and to show how important this collaboration was for Japan. The ceremony is again an important part of the resolutions to strengthen common ties and reconciliation efforts between the two countries (VOA Indonesia).

Among the efforts for normalization mentioned above, let us turn again to examine closely their signification as collective remembrance. For instance, in the commemoration held in Canada by the Association for Learning and Preserving the History of WWII in Asia (ALPHA) counted on the attendance of Chinese and Japanese representatives, in an effort to transcend nationalities and put forth the idea of a common identity of human beings (Maalouf 2001). Instead of polarizing identities into bad perpetrators and good victims, as it occurs in some Hollywood movies, following Asian principles of human respect, politeness and human unity, all participants were seen to be part of the process, regardless of their roles.

Furthermore, it is obvious that normalization and reconciliation efforts seek to raise awareness both at the domestic as well as the international levels of society with regards to the horrible human tragedy of Nanjing. Efforts are directed towards peace making and seek to prevent such events from happening again in the future. They function as recollection, group memory, and reminder from generation to generation. Beyond the resolutions adopted by the international military justice that judged the incident, and the acknowledgement of leaders from both countries regarding the problems faced in the past, many of the efforts described in these pages are fundamental elements of transformation and reconciliation (China Global Television Network 2017).

Some challenges remain with regards to the Nanjing Incident. First, the fact that sad memories have a longer staying power than good memories. Sometimes the emotional output of such resentment drowns any normalizing and reconciliation attempts. According to Elizabeth Kensinger, author of *Emotional Memory across the Adult Lifespan* (2009), people's memories establish priorities based on emotions. Apparently, negative memories weigh more than positive ones, since they drag higher emotional content. Thus, people of China, as they would in any other country of the world undergoing similar circumstances, tend to remember more the Nanjing Incident than the efforts made by the leaders of both countries to normalize their relationship. The memory of the Mukden Incident, when on September 18, 1931, Lt. Suemori Kawamoto detonated a small quantity of dynamite close to a railway line owned by Japan's South Manchuria Railway near Mukden, which led to the Japanese

Imperial Army occupation of Manchuria after blaming Chinese dissidents for the act, sticks more in Chinese minds than reconciliation efforts made later by Japan, for example during a natural disaster when an earthquake hit China in 2008.

Indeed, in order to assess the level of normalization taking place between the two countries, a survey was carried out in 2016 by Pew Research Center, a nonpartisan think tank based in Washington, D.C. USA that provides information on social issues, public opinion, and demographic trends. The survey showed the following results: about 81 percent of Japanese thinks that Chinese are arrogant; Similarly, the proportion of Chinese who think the same about Japan is about 70 percent; about 76 percent of Japanese think that China is a nationalist country; the proportion of Chinese who think that Japan is nationalist is also about 70 percent. As for opinions on violence, 71 percent of Japanese think that the Chinese are violent; in China 74 percent think the same about Japan. Finally, only 12 percent of Japanese think that Chinese people are honest. In the Chinese case, 15 percent think that Japan is honest (see Panda "How China and Japan see each other" 2016).

Similarly, data compiled by U.K.-based risk management company Verisk Maplecroft about the situation of vulnerability to natural disasters showed that China has a propensity of 50 percent, which in the case of Japan raises to 96 percent. Other countries showing similar rates are Bangladesh with 100 percent, Indonesia 91 percent, Mexico and the Philippines 86 percent, India with 82 percent, Brazil 75 percent, Pakistan 70 percent and the United States 65 percent. In response to the fact that East Asian countries have a higher risk propensity, countries in the region should help each other when natural disaster hits. For example, bilateral and multilateral cooperation would also contribute to reduce the number of victims, should such a disaster occur. In such a situation, the helping hands of neighboring countries would be essential.

It is clear that normalization efforts involving only government officials of both countries has a very limited impact on public opinion and participation. Therefore, the normalization's effect is limited in many ways. The recollection events regarding the Nanjing Incident are an exception. Their impact was much greater as it involved the whole of society, the two countries, and several other countries in the world.

Besides, in spite of all these efforts towards reconciliation, issues such as the territorial disputes between these two countries remain unresolved and can become time bombs which can explode at any time. For instance, tension increased in 2012 when Japan nationalized Senkaku island (Dayou Island in Chinese version) to stop Tokyo Governor, Shintaro Ishihar, from buying the island using public money. Conflict raised again in 2013 when China responded by creating an air-defense identification zone which covers the island (see British Broadcasting Corporation News "How uninhabited islands soured China-Japan ties").

Even though the challenges mentioned above are real, the fact that Japan and China need each other is unquestionable. Both need to keep the uneasy equilibrium between their national interests and their mutual international development. In terms of trade and investment, China imports from Japan more than any other country, which of course it has something to do with the fact that Chinese population is 1.3 billion. China also needs Japan to help with technological development as well as in

the area of energy efficiency and eco-friendly know-how (see Schuman). In other sectors, such as political relations and security, Japan and China need to collaborate and anticipate the possible nuclear war between North Korea and the United States, with tension between Trump and Kim Jong Un. Undoubtedly, the countries in the region, including Japan and China should work hand in hand to prevent the conflict from escalating; not just for the sake of the people in the region, but also for the people in the world.

To conclude, this paper has focused on the example of the Nanking Incident, one of the horrors in human history. The research has shown that recollection and reconciliation are possible, and that such horrific events are worth remembering in order to maintain a permanent reminder that helps ensure that similar tragedies do not happen again. I have also shown how reconciliation efforts have been supported by many people, not just in the two countries involved, but also across the world, helping to build this collective memory of the Nanjing Incident. The paper has shown the difficulties in negotiating a path towards reconciliation and peace, and the struggles and efforts carried out, involving various activities such as books, a National Memorial Hall, an Annual Memory Day, a registration at UNESCO, the establishment of a Peace and Research Institute, and registration of Nanjing as Word City of Peace. The report has also focused, however briefly, in pointing out other acts of normalization in the bilateral relations and reconciliation efforts made by Japan and China after the Nanjing Incident. These efforts are not small, and apart from the leaders in both countries, other neighboring countries in the region, as well nations across the world are continually involved in keeping stability in the region, ensuring security and the well-being of populations. Through the example of the Nanking Incident, the paper has sought to show international efforts of reconciliation can work, and has focused towards showing the advantages of cooperation, over the disadvantages of pursuing selfish individual approaches. The ultimate goal of all these efforts is maintaining peace and well-being in the countries involved, the East Asia region, as well as in the rest of the world. Remembering the horrible events of the past can help us move beyond victims and perpetrators towards a world of reconciliation and collaboration.

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